

California State Journal of Medicine.

Owned and Published Monthly by the
Medical Society of the State of California

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State Journal, - - -	San Francisco.
Official Register, - - -	

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VOL. XIII JANUARY, 1915 No. 1

EDITORIAL NOTES

THE NEW YEAR—AND GREETINGS!

Comes now another year with its three hundred sixty-five clean new pages awaiting their inscription, and who shall venture to say how they shall mark recorded events? Truly, we may be thankful that no one can tell us the happenings to be, for perhaps some of us might throw away many of these days and others consume many of them in anxious waiting. The JOURNAL, the Publication Committee and the Editor extend their thanks to you all, every one, for the help that you have given in the past year and for the help that we feel sure you will give during this coming year, so pregnant of possibilities. We know what a potent thing suggestion is, and so it is a good and valuable custom to send out on the very first day, wishes for "A Happy New Year"; perhaps happiness forced into the first day of the year may tinge the whole twelve-month to our own better feelings. And so, to you, A Happy New Year! May we strive hard to make ourselves better physicians and better citizens; our county organizations stronger and more helpful to their members, each member doing his own little share of the work of betterment—and not only scientific betterment, but social and personal betterment to the decrease of bickerings and jealousies and idle contentions that harm none but each one of us. Let us earnestly try to write better things on these 365 pages than we ever wrote before. A Happy New Year!

WHAT IS HONESTY?

In the last issue of the JOURNAL was printed a letter written to me, and my answer. In the answer the statement was made that probably no one is entirely honest and for that statement I have been taken to task. But it is quite easy to demonstrate the truth of it to anyone who will stop and really think. Honesty is undoubtedly to be found on every hand; and equally undoubtedly, it pays. But, probably because of the fundamental characteristic of a desire to get something for nothing that exists in all of us, we can find queer streaks of large or small honesty mixed with large or small dishonesty. Why is it required that large numbers be placed on automobiles? If everyone who owned an automobile, knowing that there is a tax on such vehicles, went promptly each year to the tax office and paid the proper tax voluntarily; and if everyone who owned or ran an automobile and hit some person or thing would immediately notify the police, giving his correct name and address, would numbers be needed on automobiles? That is a very simple thing, an every day thing, and yet, when you come to think of it, is it not a little illuminating? Again, for a simple illustration: Did you ever know anyone who really admitted the full amount of his personal property for taxation purposes? Men who individually would not think of taking a five-cent piece that did not belong to them, will collectively wreck a railroad or ruin many people by manipulations that result to their own profit and benefit. To go higher and take an ecclesiastical example: The Trinity Church Corporation, in New York, is one of the richest church holdings in this country; it is enormously wealthy. For many years it owned and collected the rents from a number of tenement houses that were a disgrace to any civilized community; dark, damp, disease-breeding shacks that reeked of filth and germs of disease and death. The toll of life collected by Trinity Church from these tenements will never be known, but it must have been very great. And yet the affairs of the corporation were administered by gray-haired dignified and undoubtedly most honest gentlemen and it is safe to presume that in all the years of their administration, not a single penny went astray. Is it enough? One could go on indefinitely citing illustration after illustration of this peculiar quirk in the human mind. A great jurist once said that if every adult person were to be punished for an infraction of one or more existing laws, there would be no one out of jail!—P. M. J.

SPECIALS TO THE A. M. A., SAN FRANCISCO, 1915.

A special train to carry the New York and New England members and delegates to the A. M. A. meeting in San Francisco, June 21 to 25, is already planned and reservations are being made. The special is being handled by the McCann agency, in New York, and they have arranged a schedule that will bring their more than welcome trainload of physicians into San Francisco June 20th. On the return, this party goes north

through Portland, Seattle, etc., and will stop one day at Rochester, Minn., for a visit to the Mayo clinic. This is but the first of many special trains that will be made up to bring members from various parts of the country, but we are glad to notice that our friends in New York have begun early to arrange matters so as to be with us this June. Good luck and a pleasant trip to them.

"PHYSICIANS' PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION" NOT ENDORSED BY STATE SOCIETY.

We have been advised that an organization or association calling itself "The Physicians' Protective Association" and ostensibly formed for collecting accounts of physicians and dentists and issuing policies of protection against alleged malpractice, claims to have the endorsement of the State Society. The concern has been operating in Los Angeles and has more recently opened an office for business in San Francisco. It in no way has the endorsement of the State Society or any other society that we know of and any claim so made is probably for the purpose of misleading our members. We do not know much about this association but it can be taken for granted that any concern that starts out by misrepresentation is one to be avoided.

WORTH REPETITION.

The following quotation from the *Bulletin* of the Lake County (Ind.), Medical Society, touching as it does on a point so often mentioned in these columns, is well worthy of perusal. Doctors are notoriously easy to get into wildcat companies, mines, oil schemes and the like. If they would but ask advice or take counsel, they would save themselves many and many thousands of dollars:

Has it ever occurred to you as being peculiar that so many stocks are offered to physicians? It hardly seems possible that the salesmen who have various good things to offer, should all be philanthropists, and yet, one would gain that opinion after listening to their talk a few moments. The fact is, physicians are generally regarded as "easy marks" by stock salesmen. We have yet to hear of any of our friends getting in on a good thing through the offers of these salesmen, but know of many cases to the contrary. Give them the "once over" before listening too intently.

MAIL-ORDER FRAUDS AND OTHER PAMPHLETS.

"Medical Mail-Order Frauds" is the title of a recently issued pamphlet from the Propaganda department of the A. M. A., and it is to be had from the Chicago office for the nominal price of ten cents. A number of other pamphlets dealing with various sorts of frauds, quacks and bunks have been issued and it would be an excellent thing if physicians generally would get a few copies of these pamphlets and hand them to occasional laymen or patients to read; it all helps to spread the good work of education. The Propaganda Department, working in co-operation with the Council on Pharmacy and Chemistry, is doing a tremendously valuable task for the good of the people. More power to it.

COUNTY UNITS, BE CAREFUL!

We cannot too often call attention to the fact that a large number of unqualified physicians are being granted licenses to practice in this state under the present law, and that all county units should exercise the greatest care in investigating applicants for membership. A recently published article from a member of the Board of Medical Examiners admits this condition of things, and the records in the office of the State Society amply prove it. Many persons are securing licenses now, who have been rejected over and over in years past, under the old law. What the present legislature will do is, of course, an unknown quantity, but the activity of the osteopaths, some disgruntled factions in the regular ranks and a horde of quacks, is well known. Letting down the bars and reducing standards required for the practice of medicine is what legislatures call "being fair and liberal to all"; but is it fair to the people to allow these quacks to pillage them? The trend of things, not alone in this state but also in many others, seems to indicate that it will be easier and easier for almost anyone to get some sort of a license to practice something—which is but a roundabout way of getting a right to practice medicine and surgery, though totally unqualified to do so. It seems probable that we must reconcile ourselves to the inevitable coming of the time when a license to practice will not mean much of anything as an indication of the ability of the licensed one to care for the sick or injured. What is to be done? It is useless for us to plead with the legislature for they say we are biased and unfair and a "medical trust." The one only hope in sight, seems to be to build up our county societies, in quality and not quantity merely, and to safeguard and protect membership so that it will be a real badge of qualification to practice medicine. In other words, make membership in the Society take the place, so far as practical purposes go, of the state license to practice. Think it over and see how you can help do this.

SPLENDID WORK.

The "Propaganda for Reform" department of the A. M. A. has done and is doing splendid work in uncovering frauds in patent medicines, quackery, etc., and it should receive our sincere respect and support. It has just issued a catalogue of lantern slides made up to illustrate a large number of these fakes in lectures to the public, and it would be an excellent thing if some of the county units would look into this matter, send for the catalogue and arrange to give one or more public lectures, illustrated with lantern slides, for the benefit of the public. Any sort of a lantern slide show will draw a good many people and so much beneficial enlightening would result. A request to the A. M. A. office will bring the catalogue, "Lantern Slides and Exhibit Cards" and the prices are very reasonable. Try it.